

JCS 2101/427

8 May 1961

Pages 3/18-3/19 (incl)

NOTE BY THE SECRETARIES

JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

OF

POLICY GUIDANCE ON PLANS FOR CENTRAL WAR (U)

1. The enclosed memorandum by the Deputy Secretary of Defense, dated 5 May 1961, subject as above, together with its attachment, is referred to the JCS for comment and recommendation as a matter of priority.

2. It is desired that the JCS report to the J-5 by 7 June 1961.

R. M. BROWN

M. J. INGELDO

Joint Secretaries

* Enclosure

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JCS 2101/427

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ENCLOSURE

POLICY GUIDANCE ON PLANS FOR CENTRAL WAR

Consisting of:

1. Memorandum for the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, by the Deputy Secretary of Defense, dated 5 May 1961. Abstracted as above. 3 pages.
2. Draft, in part, of proposed new Basic National Security Policy. 16 pages.

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Enclosure

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THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

WASHINGTON
MAY 5 1961

Memorandum for the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff

SUBJECT: Policy Guidance on Plans for Central War

Our plans and programs should provide a significant range of alternative response options appropriate to the various foreseeable forms of a thermonuclear war emergency. The ability of the President to select a response suited to the specific circumstances prevailing at the time of hostilities should enhance deterrence and could permit the United States and its Allies, if central war occurred, to secure military, civil and political outcomes markedly more advantageous than might otherwise be expected.

The attached draft of a section of the proposed new Basic National Security Policy reflects current thinking on the goals, criteria, and the nature of required capabilities for a posture permitting controlled, discriminating response. To the degree made feasible by progress toward the requisite capabilities, it should be possible concurrently to reflect in basic policies and war plans provisions for increased latitude in response options to thermonuclear war emergency. Such recent or currently programmed innovations as integrated operational planning for strategic offensive forces, mobile alternate command posts at national level and below, the extension of the bomb alarm system and the introduction of the Polaris system all lend themselves to immediate exploitation in the interests of greater strategic flexibility. We should be interested, therefore, not only the long-run improvements of posture in this direction, but in pursuing opportunities for partial and progressive development on a continuous basis, beginning as soon as possible.

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The Joint Chiefs of Staff are requested to cause the Director of Strategic Target Planning to scrutinize the current SIOP-62 and forces committed to its execution, and that appropriate unified and specified commanders similarly scrutinize their current war plans covering atomic capable offensive forces not committed to the SIOP. Recognizing that these plans already permit a variety of options keyed to duration of warning, geographic discretion, constraints, and specifics of weather and visibility, the objective of this scrutiny will be to provide answers to the following questions:

a. In light of considerations in the attached paper and of such new capabilities as those mentioned above, to what specific extent might it be feasible in the near term to provide a wider latitude of options for response to thermonuclear war emergency, assuming that any impediments to this action embodied in the current National Strategic Targeting and Attack Policy were removed?

b. What would be a realistic time schedule for the earliest integration of such feasible additions to current response options into operational plans?

c. If further desirable options would depend on capabilities not currently programmed, would changes in our capabilities be feasible at reasonable cost and effort in the near term, and what specific actions would be necessary?

d. What capabilities not presently programmed would be the principal requirements for a future posture permitting a still wider variety of response options calculated to derive maximum advantage from any of the foreseeable circumstances under which central war might occur?

e. Are any other major problems or difficulties foreseen, in light of the recognized necessity to avoid any disruption or reduction of current capabilities?

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Mr. McNamara and I are particularly interested in assessment of the possibilities for early development of options relieving selected elements of ready forces from initial attack assignments to permit their retention as uncommitted ready reserves; options permitting avoidance of attacks against enemy urban-industrial, population and governmental control centers as such in initial attacks; options permitting exclusion from initial attack, to the extent feasible, of one or more member nations of the Sino-Soviet Bloc without the necessity for replanning the balance of the attack; options providing varying degrees of adjustment in force posture, beyond those currently planned, during periods of critical tension; options permitting attacks against ready military strengths while minimizing "bonus" damage to non-military population and resources.

If possible, the Director of Strategic Target Planning should respond to this inquiry by 15 June 1961.

Rowell Tulpitt

DEPUTY

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~~TOP SECRET~~Major National Security Objectives

The security interests of the United States determine, at all times, multiple national security objectives. Each provides a distinct criterion by which to judge the adequacy of an overall military posture and the strategy for its use. The most urgent objectives are:

1. To deter any deliberate major nuclear assault upon the United States or its Allies.
2. To deter and counter attempts by the Sino-Soviet Bloc to extend its political, military and ideological influence by direct or indirect, overt or covert threat or use of force.
3. To reduce the likelihood of uncalculated, unpremeditated or inadvertent nuclear attacks. To reduce the likelihood of accidents, misinterpretation of incidents or intentions, false alarms, or unauthorized actions within any nation (including the United States and its Allies); and to reduce the possibility that such events may trigger major nuclear war.
4. To inhibit and, if possible, to reverse the diffusion of nuclear weapons; to reduce the likelihood of nuclear attacks by minor nuclear powers, against the interests of the U.S.; and to reduce the possibility that such attacks may trigger major nuclear war.
5. To protect U. S. security interests in any armed conflict involving U. S. forces which might occur. In particular:

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